

Application No. 09/675,743
Amendment Dated March 23, 2004
Reply to Final Rejection of February 24, 2004

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A safety handlebar comprising:

a frame having opposing, tubular outer ends;

a shaft having first and second shaft ends, the first shaft end being slidably connected with one of the tubular outer ends;

a bias member operatively associated with the shaft and the frame so as to bias the second shaft end away from the one tubular outer end of the frame; and

a dampener operatively associated with the shaft, the frame and the bias member, said dampener being adapted to dampen displacement of the second shaft end away from the one tubular outer end of the frame in response to compression of the bias member from a pre-impact position to a compressed position by an impact force with said frame, such that after the impact force is released, said dampener slows a return speed of said bias member from the compressed position to the pre-impact position for preventing the second shaft end from springing back to a second shaft end pre-impact position at an undampened return speed, wherein the dampener is further adapted to dampen expansion of the bias member from the compressed position to the pre-impact position more than compression of the bias member from the pre-impact position to the compressed position.

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2. (Original) The handlebar according to claim 1, wherein the bias member is a helical spring.

3. (Original) The handlebar according to claim 1, further comprising a compressible cap coupled with the second shaft end for movement with the second shaft end.

4. (Original) The handlebar according to claim 1 further comprising a cover coupled with the shaft to slidably telescope on the one outer end of the frame.

Claims 5-15 (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) A child-safe handlebar comprising:

a generally tubular frame having a tubular outer end;

a shaft having opposing first and second shaft ends, the first shaft end being slidably telescoped with the tubular outer end;

a bias member operatively associated with the shaft and the frame so as to bias the second shaft end away from the tubular outer end; and

a fluid dampener operatively associated with the frame, the shaft and the bias member, said dampener being adapted to dampen displacement of the second shaft end away from the tubular outer end in response to compression of the bias member from a pre-impact position to a compressed position by an impact force with said frame, such that after the impact force is released, said dampener slows a return speed of said bias member from the compressed position to the pre-impact position for preventing the second shaft end from springing back to a second shaft end pre-impact position at an undamped return speed, wherein the dampener is further

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adapted to dampen expansion of the bias member from the compressed position to the pre-impact position more than compression of the bias member from the pre-impact position to the compressed position.

Claims 17-18 (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) The handlebar of claim 16 wherein the dampener comprises:

an air flow damper operatively connected to the first shaft end such that the air flow damper is in a first, non-fluid flow obstructing orientation when the second shaft end is displaced toward the frame, and the air flow damper is in a second, fluid flow obstructing position when the biasing member displaces the second shaft end away from the frame to slow displacement of the second shaft end away from the frame.

20. (Previously Presented) The handlebar of claim 16 further comprising:

a biasing member coupled between the shaft and the frame so as to absorb energy as the shaft slides into the outer end of the frame.

21. (Withdrawn) The handlebar of claim 1 wherein the dampener comprises:

a first chamber associated with the second shaft end;

a second chamber associated with the first shaft end;

a dampening fluid contained within at least one of the first and second chambers;

a first one-way valve fluidly connecting the first chamber to the second chamber so as to

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allow the dampening fluid to flow only from the first chamber to the second chamber; and

a second one-way valve fluidly connecting the second chamber to the first chamber so as to allow the dampening fluid to flow only from the second chamber to the first chamber, the second one-way valve having a second opening smaller than a first opening in the first one-way valve.

22. (Withdrawn) The handlebar according to claim 21, further comprising a cover extending over the shaft between the second shaft end and the one outer end of the handlebar frame, a first end of the cover being slidably disposed over the outer end of the frame and a second end of the cover being fixedly coupled with the second end of the shaft so as to telescope with the shaft along the one outer end of the handlebar frame; and

a generally annular wall extending radially outwardly from the outer frame end, a radial end of the wall being slidably disposed against the cover.

23. (Withdrawn) The handlebar according to claim 22, wherein the first chamber is defined at least in part by the annular wall, the cover, and the shaft.

24. (Withdrawn) The handlebar according to claim 22, wherein the second chamber is defined at least in part by the annular wall, the cover, and the frame.

25. (Withdrawn) The handlebar according to claim 21, wherein the dampening fluid is a dampening grease.

26. (Withdrawn) The handlebar according to claim 21, wherein the bias member is a helical spring.

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27. (Withdrawn) The handlebar according to claim 21, further comprising a compressible cap affixed with the second shaft end.

28. (Previously Presented) The handlebar of claim 16 wherein the dampener comprises:

a first chamber associated with the second shaft end; and

a dampening fluid contained within the first chamber.

29. (Withdrawn) The handlebar of claim 28 further comprising a second chamber associated with the first shaft end and at least one valve fluidly coupling the first and second chambers.